

Embracing Change at DECH

Dear Friend of DECH,

Since our last issue of Good Medicine, we have made many changes at our hospital designed to strengthen programs and services offered to our patients. We have worked closely with Eastern Maine Healthcare Systems to bring their most talented people to look at our hospital and offer suggestions for improvement. Likewise, we have had several visits from state and Centers for Medicaid Services surveyors to look at where we stand in regard to state and federal standards governing hospital operations.

One of the areas of focus involves our quality improvement program. Different from the monitoring of quality that we have always done, quality improvement is a program that looks at a process and makes it measurably better. For example, we know that patients care how long they must wait to be seen in our Emergency Department. There are a number of factors that delay service including the most obvious – that there are more urgent cases requiring the doctor's attention. However, there are many other processes that may delay care and our improvement efforts are designed to look for all of those factors and determine which ones can be shortened. Is there a way to collect and process laboratory specimens or perform x-ray exams more rapidly? Is there a faster triage system that notifies the entire team about how many and what types of patients are waiting for care? Do we have the right number of exam rooms and staff on duty? By focusing on all of the contributing factors, we know that we can improve. The goals we establish are intended to be measurable. It's not good enough to say we will shorten the waiting time. Our goals are set by measuring how long the average patient waits for care and then we set a goal, such as, reducing the waiting time by 25%. If we achieve that goal we might decide to improve even further if it appears that there is a greater opportunity to improve.

Our improvement program is not an option. We have looked at every department and service and established improvement goals. We've done that in areas, such as the Emergency Department, laboratory, Human Resources and maintenance. Every area is working to pursue improvement goals. Our goals must be important. We are not going to waste time with insignificant processes. We are looking for big steps that our patients say are important. Then, when we achieve a goal, we will always have a list to work on and we have teams that monitor our quality improvement work and make sure efforts are always pressing forward.

Some of our other efforts are designed to ensure that we catch problems before they happen. In the operating room we have a "time out" before each case starts. Just like a pilot has a checklist, your hospital, like most hospitals everywhere, has a checklist that we constantly monitor. No case will move forward until everyone in the room is satisfied that everything and everyone is ready. In the Emergency Department, we have a time out before the patient leaves, to make sure that everyone agrees that we have met the patient's needs and that the doctor and nurse are both in agreement with the discharge plan.

Other efforts are designed to just be sure we know how we are doing for our patients. We measure outcomes. We want to know how many patients are readmitted to the hospital within 48 hours of discharge. We want to know how many complaints we have received in each area. We want to know when we have to ask a patient for additional studies for a clinical test. It's important to know how often a patient leaves without seeing the doctor or against medical advice. These efforts help us to know when a process is or is not performing as expected. Please continue to read the following pages of Good Medicine for more welcome change at your hospital.

With best regards always,
Douglas T. Jones, FACHE
President & CEO



We Are Proud of Our Accomplishments at DECH

Small Incisions



Before laparoscopic surgical procedures were available, large incisions were required to perform abdominal surgery. Now there is an even less invasive surgical procedure called *Single Incision Laparoscopic Surgery (SILS)*. This new procedure is being used by Aziz Massaad, MD at Down East Community Hospital. This procedure is one of the latest advancements in minimally-invasive surgery and it involves performing abdominal operations with laparoscopic instruments placed through a single, small umbilical (belly button) incision. As a result of having a surgery with such a small incision (approximately two thirds of an inch), the patient could expect to experience less pain and a quicker recovery with the added benefit of almost no visible post-operative scars. “*Single incision laparoscopic surgery is feasible for a variety of general surgical operations, such as removal of the gallbladder and removal of the appendix.*” stated Dr. Massaad. DECH is one of less than five hospitals in Maine to perform this new approach in laparoscopic surgery.



Outstanding Pharmacist

Down East Community Hospital *Pharmacist*, Mike Dudzik, is a recipient of a prestigious literature award from the *American Society of Hospital Pharmacists Foundation* for innovation in pharmacy practice in health systems. Mike and three of his colleagues share this award for implementing after-hours pharmacy coverage for critical access hospitals in northeast Minnesota. The award ceremony took place in Las Vegas, Nevada at the ASHP mid-year conference.

Dedication Recognized



Christine Kuhni, Women’s Health Nurse Practitioner at Milbridge Medical Center was selected to receive the *2010 AANP Nurse Practitioner Advocate State Award for Excellence*. This prestigious award is given annually to a dedicated nurse practitioner advocate in each state who has made a significant contribution to the status of health-care delivery and the practice of Nurse Practitioners. In 2003, Chris Kuhni decided to tackle the overwhelming health problems facing her community. She began writing grants and fundraising in an effort to create a resource center that would serve all of Washington County. In 2006, the *Women’s Health Resource Library (WHRL)* opened its doors as the first and only fully staffed center of its kind in the state. Its mission is to advance and promote the health of the individual, the family and the community. Chris volunteers her time as executive director of the WHRL, in addition to her full time women’s health practice. The WHRL serves as a model for other communities striving to address the health care crisis; and Chris has shown her community that a nurse practitioner can be an agent of change, creating solutions and empowering citizens.

Leadership by Example

Arlena Ryan, RN, *Director of Nursing Services* at Sunrise Care Facility, completed a nine-week class designed by Maine Health Care Association for nurse leaders who are currently serving as the Director of Nursing in a long term care setting. The goal of the class was to offer nurse leaders the opportunity to learn new skills, fine-tune existing knowledge, explore value-based leadership, and hone the skills and competencies that are needed to be successful in their role and to serve their long term care residents well.



Leading Edge Care

Sunrise Care Facility recently was added to the ranks of the few long term care facilities in Washington and Hancock counties that provide *Intravenous (IV) Therapy* for their clients. *"This is very exciting news for the long term residents at our facility as well as our rehabilitation clients. Having IV therapy available at our facility will reduce the length of our client's inpatient hospital stays. They will be able to return to our facility more quickly so they can continue their healing process in familiar surroundings."* stated Geri Bryant, Administrator of Sunrise Care Facility.

"This is very exciting news for the long term residents at our facility..."

*- Geri Bryant,
Administrator of
Sunrise Care Facility*



left to right: Arlena Ryan, Director of Nursing, Paula Flaherty, RN, D'Anna Beal, RN, Holly Tyler, RN, Shirley Norton, RN

What's New at DECH

Karen Young Promoted

Karen Young, RN, CNOR was promoted to *Chief Nursing Officer* at Down East Community Hospital. Karen came to DECH in 2005 as an Inpatient Director. She went on to become the manager of the operating room in 2006 and then was promoted to Vice President for Quality Improvement in 2008. Karen has more than 27 years of nursing experience and 11 years in nurse management. Karen stated, *"I am very honored and humbled to assume this new role at DECH."*



EMMC Leader Joins DECH

Down East Community Hospital welcomes **Joanne Flemming, RN, CEN** as our new *Outpatient Director* with responsibility for the Emergency Department. Joanne comes to us from Eastern Maine Medical Center (EMMC) where she worked as a staff nurse in its 26+ bed Emergency Department and moved on to become a clinical supervisor. Joanne has 24 years of nursing experience and a strong background in chart review, chart documentation, compliance, and quality improvement.



Stepping Up in Surgical Services

Erin Ingalls, RN, BSN, CNOR was recently promoted to *Director of Surgical Services* at Down East Community Hospital. *"Erin has been working as the Assistant Director for the last several months and has done a GREAT job. We are so excited that she has taken this new role"*, stated Karen Young, Chief Nursing Officer.

Erin graduated from the University of Maine, Orono in 2001 and has worked in *Surgical Services* at DECH for the past five years. She lives in Machias with her husband and two children. *"I'm happy to have this opportunity to accept this position and be a part of the organizational transformation of Down East Community Hospital. I'm excited for the challenge in helping create a positive cultural change within the hospital as well as within the community,"* stated Erin.

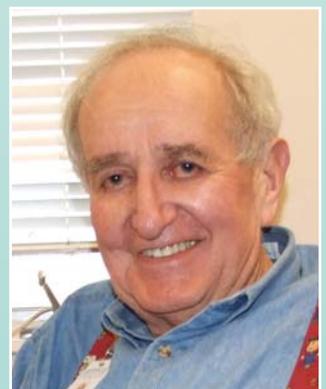


Welcoming New Board Certified Doctor

Down East Community Hospital welcomes **Stanley Gold, MD**. Dr. Gold is serving as *Director of our Emergency Department* and is also serving as our *Emergency Department Chief of Staff*. Dr. Gold is a Board Certified ED-MD who completed his residency at Lenox Hill Hospital, New York, NY in 1966 and is a graduate of the New York University School of Medicine. Dr. Gold is a lifetime member of the American College of Emergency Physicians.

"I'm thrilled to be here at DECH working with this growing, energetic staff. I came here to enjoy the venue, grow in experience, and contribute to the success of the hospital. I discovered a gem." stated Dr. Gold.

The knowledge and experience Dr. Gold brings to DECH is invaluable. We are fortunate to have him.



DECH Welcomes New Inpatient Director

Vanessa Ovitt, RN, BSN comes to us from Santa Barbara, California after spending two years as a clinical medical surgical educator. Vanessa has been a nurse for more than 22 years and is currently finishing her Masters in Nursing for Nurse Practitioner. Vanessa and her husband are native New Englanders and are delighted to be back in the Northeast.



Advancing Change

Fran Loring, RN has been appointed *Director of Professional Excellence* at Down East Community Hospital. Fran comes to us with more than 25 years of service with Eastern Maine Healthcare Systems. Fran managed many different departments during her years at Eastern Maine Medical Center and worked in various positions that focused on Quality, Service Excellence, and staff development. She comes to us highly recommended. Many of us at DECH find her energy and positive can-do attitude very refreshing.



Helping Kids With a Smile

There are children in Washington County with severe dental disease. So severe, that specialized hospital sedation dentistry is necessary. Children with disabilities and very young children are the most at risk for developing dental disease, and require sedation if dental treatment is to be administered effectively and safely. By restoring “baby teeth” to health, we not only promote healthy permanent teeth for our children, but also boost the overall health, development and self esteem of these young individuals.

Three years ago Down East Community Hospital partnered with the Washington County Dental Health Task Force and the Washington County Children’s Program to raise funds necessary to begin a pediatric hospital sedation dentistry program at Down East Community Hospital. At that time, the closest service providers that offered sedation dentistry to children and youth from our area were located in Bangor, Brewer, Falmouth and Portland. Most providers limit the number of Maine Care cases they will see, or refuse altogether to accept Maine Care eligible patients. For many local families, the distance and cost involved in accessing services proved to be insurmountable barriers.

The long awaited program began at DECH on August 14 of this year and is going well. “We’re pleased to be a part of the Pediatric Sedation Dentistry Program and provide this service to young children who require extensive dental work”, stated Erin Ingalls, RN, *Director of Surgical Services*. The patients’ and families’ who have benefited from this care expressed their appreciation to Daniel Wood, DMD and to Down East Community Hospital for these much needed services in Washington County.



Active In The Community

Flu Shot Clinic & More

Over 1,000 people from Milbridge to Calais arrived to attend the *Down East Community Hospital's 4th Annual Flu Shot Clinic*. At this event, over 1,000 flu shots and over 200 cholesterol and glucose screenings were provided for free by the Hospital. In addition to the free flu shots and free screenings, health information was available from various Hospital departments.

The entire day was very well received by the participants. "This is a great service to the community", "Very well-planned", "This is the best one yet", "I hardly had to wait at all" were just some of the many comments from participants.

The hospital staff, hospital volunteers, and *DECH Auxiliary* worked together to make this important event a success for our community. This being a true community event, *Columbia Supermarket* donated 500 cookies and *Parlin Flowers* donated 100 cookies and decorations. *Many thanks to all.*

In addition to this event, flu shot clinics were provided by Down East Community Hospital at DECH Medical Associates in Machias and at Milbridge Medical Center where well over 600 vaccinations were dispensed.



top photo:
Phlebotomist – Crystal Look, Kim Dube & Katie McDonald
Middle photo:
Veronica Conley, RN



DECH Nurses Rally to Vaccinate Students for H1N1

As in keeping with the Down East tradition, the nursing staff at Down East Community Hospital recognized the importance and necessity of vaccinating our smallest population of the community. With an awareness of the limited resources for our area schools, the nursing staff at DECH joined our public health nurse, **Cindy Look, RN**, to vaccinate the children in Machias and surrounding area schools for H1N1.

Recognizing the urgency of vaccine administration for our area children and receiving a very limited amount of vaccine from the state at the time, *Infection Prevention* nurse **Donna Stanley-Kelley, RN** gathered the more than willing group of nurses from DECH including **Judy Lingley, RN**; **Stephanie Wood, RN**; **Taryn Finlay, RN**; and **Shelley Otto, RN**. This group of dedicated professionals vaccinated the children of Machias Valley Christian School, Whiting Village School, Bay Ridge Elementary School and the Elm Street School in a very short period of time. A total of 500 doses were received during the week of November 9 and were dispensed within one week. Other clinics scheduled during the week of November 16 included Rose M. Gaffney School, Machias High School, Fort O'Brien and Jonesboro.

Upon completion of our local schools, any further shipments of vaccine will be sent to DECH Medical Associates pediatric practice and Milbridge Medical Center pediatric practice for further vaccination of the children who were unable to attend the clinics.

Cindy Look, RN



Judy Lingley, RN, Shelley Otto, RN, Taryn Finlay, RN, Donna Stanley-Kelley, RN, Stephanie Wood, RN

Cancer... There Is Hope

Lori Yensan, RN, ADN, CRN, BS and Sue Dorr, LSW served on the committee of the “Cancer... There is Hope Here in Washington County” program. Lori and Gwen Jones, PT, MS participated in the annual event by exhibiting what Down East Community Hospital has to offer cancer patients locally. Lori shared information on what DECH offered at their infusion clinic and spoke about what we would like to be able to offer in the next five years. Gwen, who is a certified Lymphodema therapist, described the therapy services she could offer at our *Rehabilitation Services* department.



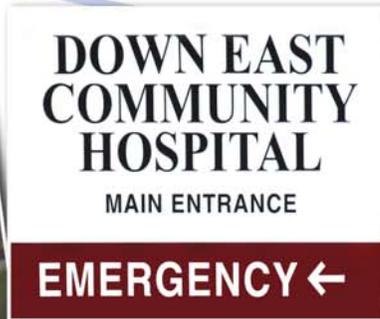
Supporting Our Troops

With the help of our **Customer Service Team**, the employees at Down East Community Hospital adopted the *20th ASOS (Air Support Operation Squadron)* stationed in Afghanistan. We chose this particular unit because it includes one of our own. By joining forces with *Machias Dental*, we were able to send 13 boxes filled with anything from beef jerky to toothbrushes. Our troops make sacrifices that most of us can only imagine, we hope these gifts bring some happiness to their day.



William Albee, Linda Albee, Scott Huber, James Rohan, MD, Janet Paddock, Samantha Williams

Quality and Safety



Recent changes at DECH promote quality and safety through improved access to the Emergency Department and to the Rehabilitation & Therapy building. Respiratory etiquette kiosks are now located in the Emergency Department entrance and the main entrance to the hospital.



Support Groups & Classes

Gastric Bypass Support Group

January 14 & 18, February 1,
March 1 & 15

5 pm

MacBride Building at DECH

Provides on-going support to those who have gone through gastric bypass surgery as well as their family and friends. Topics include healthy eating and nutrition, impulse control, exercise. On-going emotional support is provided around the day-to-day challenges encountered post surgery. For more information, contact Janet Monaghan at 255-0485.

Diabetes Support Group

January 8, February 5, March 5, April 2
January 15, February 19, March 19

12 noon - 1 pm

12 noon - 1 pm

Down East Community Hospital

Milbridge Medical Center

Provides on-going support to people with diabetes as well as their family and friends. Topics include nutrition, prevention of acute complications, managing high and low blood sugar, disease process, among others. On-going emotional support is provided around the day-to-day challenges faced by persons with diabetes. For more information, contact Jesse Burns, RN at 546-2391 or Julie Hixson, Community Relations & Marketing Coordinator at 255-0244

Childbirth Classes:

January 9, March 13

9 am - 4 pm

Down East Community Hospital

This free class provides expectant parents with a tour of the Hospital's Obstetrics Department, information on what to expect during labor and delivery and tips for taking care of that new bundle of joy. In the afternoon, a special "Boot Camp for Dads" is presented by a seasoned father who helps expectant dads understand what to anticipate. For more information or to register, call Jane Brissette at 255-0438.

Other Hospital Events

Open House - Down East Community Hospital

Orthopedics - Educational Seminar

Otolaryngology (Ear, Nose, Throat) - Educational Seminar

For more information, call 255-0244 for dates and times or visit our website at www.dech.org.



**DOWN EAST
COMMUNITY
HOSPITAL**



Good Medicine is published quarterly for Down East Community Hospital. We welcome comments and suggestions from readers. The information contained herein is intended to educate the community about subjects pertinent to their health, not as a substitute for consultation with a physician.

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www.dech.org